OF CONSCIENCE.

Προφῆται δύω ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν.

Sin agt H. Ghost pa. 13 to 15 — also pa. 29

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pa 14 n

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

OF CONSCIENCE.

AMong the many practicall errours which are gotten abroad into the world, a very large proportion there is of those which have either suckt their poison from, or disguised it under that specious venerable name of *Conscience*. That which the Philosophers could call their Guardian Angell, and justifie the phrase by vouching none but Angelicall dictates from it: That which some good-natured Atheists did so revere that they defined the onely deity in the world, and in proportion phansied nothing but God-like of it, is now by some Christians (like the true God among the Heathens) worshipt in so many corporeous shapes, that there is at length scarce any thing so vile (Phansie, humour, passion, prepossession, the meanest worldly interest of the ambitious or covetous designer, like the Calves, the Cats, the Crododiles, the Onions, the Leeks of *Egypt*) but hath the favour or luck to be mistaken for *Conscience*, and receive all the respect, that I say, not adoration, that belongs to it. §. 1. μόνον εἶναι συνείδησιν θεόν. Tatian.

'Twill be then but an act of justice and mercy, justice to truth, and mercy to the abused world, and withall a speciall preparative to a prudent reformation, to rescue so divine a man from such heathenish usage, to restore it to its naturall primitive simplicity, and cast out all the false formes which it hath been forced to appeare under. To which purpose all that I shall designe will be reduced to these two enquiries: §. 2.

1. What is the proper notion of conscience.
2. What is required to entitle a man to a good conscience.

For the former of these, what is the proper notion of conscience, I shall labour to finde out not among the Scholasticall definitions or divisions of it among humane Writers, but onely by observing the force and use of the word in the Scripture, particularly the New Testament. And he that shall meet it there 32 times, and but take a view of it at every meeting, will sure come to some degree of acquaintance with it, and find upon judgement reason to resolve, what for his ease I shall now lay before him. §. 3.

That the word *συνείδησις*, *Conscience*, is no more then Science or knowledge, (and therefore being but once used by the Greek Translators of the Old Testament, *Eccles.* 10.20. it is there set to expresse a word which §. 4.

is otherwiſe by them commonly rendred *σύνεσις* and *ἐπίγνωσις*) onely with a peculiar relation added to it, as that *knowledge* is in order to *action*. Thus *Tit.* 1. 15. when *νοῦς* and *συνείδησις*, mind and conſcience are diſtinguiſhed, is obvious to any to diſcerne the ground of that diſtinction, that former being properly the denotation of the faculty meerly ſpeculative, or intellectuall; this latter, of the practicall judgement, or that whether act or faculty of the underſtanding ſoule, which extendeth to practice; the Apoſtle by that phraſe, [*the mind and conſcience are defiled*] meaning diſtinctly this, that this errour in mens judgements, (which is the defiling of their mind) carryes Un-Chriſtian practice along with it, (which is the *defiling* of the *practicall* faculty) this Judaicall miſtake in their underſtanding is attended with Judaizing actions in their lives; the former apportioned to the *Ἰουδαϊκοὶ μῦθοι*, the *falſe Judaicall doctrines*, which relate to *νοῦς the mind*, the ſecond to the *ἐντολαὶ ἀνθρώπων ἀποστρεφομένων τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, the commands of men perverting the truth, v. 14. which relate to the *συνείδησις the conſcience*.

νοῦς.

συνείδησις.

§. 5. For the clearing of which (that it is ſuch a practicall knowledge in the acception of the Scripture) if there need any light, you may have it from the ſurvey of every place ſeverally, and in ſpeciall from this one, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. *This is thank-worthy, if διὰ συνείδησιν Θεοῦ, for Conſcience of God a man ſuffer griefe, &c. i. e. if* for this *obedientiall practicall knowledge of God* (this *knowledge* of truth attended with a *reſolution* not to diſobey God, though it coſt a man never ſo deare) *he ſuffer griefe, &c.*

§. 6. This being premiſed, there is but one thing more to be added to this matter, and it is this; That we take notice of the ſeverall wayes of aſpect that *Conſcience* hath upon *practice*; One forward in the direct line, another backward, or by way of reflection; which are ordinarily expreſt by the double office of *Conſcience*, 1. as a *cuſtos* or *monitor*, adviſing and inſtructing and keeping us to our duty; 2. as a *witneſſe* teſtifying to our ſelves and to God what we have done; which is in plainer termes no more but this, That there are two ſorts of *Conſcience*; 1. *Conſcience of duty to be performed*, or full perſwaſion that ſuch a thing ought to be done, or not to be done by me, a being reſolved of the neceſſity or unlawfulneſſe of any thing, and 2. *conſcience of having performed*, or not performed it, a knowing or judging my ſelf to have done well or ill. And under theſe two notions, all the ſeveralls in the New Teſtament, (and the one ſole place of the apocryphall bookes of the Old) will be contained, If you pleaſe, you may ſee how.

§. 7. To the former kind belongs that famous place, *Rom.* 13. 5. *You muſt be ſubject* (to the Supreame powers, v. 1.) *not onely for wrath, i. e.* feare or danger of puniſhment, the effect of *wrath* (the Magiſtrate *being Gods Miniſter, an avenger for wrath*, or puniſhment *to him that doth evill*, v. 4.) but alſo *διὰ συνείδησιν*, for or *becauſe of Conſcience, i. e.* becauſe it is the command of God, and conſequently that which all inferiours (*every ſoule*) may, if they be not wilfully blind, know to be their duty, [*to be thus ſubject.*]

§. 8. So 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. *For ſome with conſcience of the Idol, i.e.* being reſolved in mind, that it is not lawfull to eate or taſte of any *μέρις* or *τόμη*, *part* or *portion* of the Idol-feaſt (whether *ἐν εἰδωλείῳ, at the idoll table*, or having bought

bought it at the *Shambles*, as it ſeemes, was the faſhion for thoſe τόποι to be ſold there at ſecond hand c. 10. 25.) accounting it unlawfull to eate any meat conſecrated to that uſe, *doe* yet *eate* that which is of this nature, *and* by ſo doing, *their weake i. e.* uninſtructed *conſcience is polluted*, *i. e.* they ſinne againſt their conſcience, doe that which they are perſwaded they may not doe, which although it be never ſo innocent a harmleſſe thing in it ſelfe (an *idoll being ſimply nothing*) yet to them which doe it, when they think it unlawfull (*and all have not knowledge*, ſaith he in the beginning of the verſe, *i. e.* are not ſufficiently inſtructed in their duty) it is pollution or ſinne, according to the fore-mentioned place *Tit.* 1. 15. *To the pure all things are pure* [*all things*] *i. e.* all things of that nature of which he there ſpeaks, though in themſelves indifferent, [*are pure*] *i. e.* may lawfully be uſed [*by the pure*] *i. e.* by them which are rightly inſtructed, but to the *polluted and unbeleevers* (*i. e.* to them that are miſled by Jewiſh fables, or by the dogmatizing of falſe teachers, and brought to beleeve things to be prohibited by God, which are not prohibited) to them that are guilty of this kind of *Judaiſme*, and (as it is *interpretative*) *unbeliefe there is nothing pure, but their mind and conſcience are polluted*, both their underſtanding is in an errour, taking falſity for truth, and their practicall reſolution is ſinfull alſo, nay obliged to ſin, which way ſoever they turn themſelves, whether they abſtaine ſuperſtitiouſly, when they are not bound by God to abſtaine, (which is the ſinne of thoſe that are *ſubject to ordinances*, *Col.* 2. 20. of which I have ſpoken at large in another place) or whether they abſtaine not, when they are perſwaded that they ought to abſtaine, which is *ſin againſt conſcience*. Tr. of Will worſhip.

§. 9. From whence by the way you may obſerve the miſerable lot of thoſe which have not γνῶσιν knowledge in the beginning of that verſe, which are miſled to think any thing unlawfull which is lawfull, and continue in that errour without ſeeking of light, which are thus *impure* (for to ſuch μηδὲν κεκαθαρμένον *nothing is pure*) they are, as long as they remaine ſo, obliged to ſinne, which way ſoever they take to, abſtaine or not abſtaine. For though in things indifferent and uncommanded, ſimply to abſtaine were no ſinne, yet then to abſtaine ὡς ἀπὸ βδελυκτοῦ, as from a thing abominable or unlawfull, is both by Scripture and the ancient Councels, in caſe of marriage and meats, every where condemned as ſinfull: and yet on the other ſide to eate *without*, or againſt *Faith*, *i. e.* being doubtfull whether it be lawfull or no, or being perſwaded it is unlawfull *is ſin*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) and there is great neceſſity to ſuch of ſeeking, (and in others great charity of helping them to) γνῶσιν inſtruction, or right information in this caſe, which is the onely cure for this unfortunate malady.

§. 10. So againe ver. 10. συνείδησις ἀσθενοῦς the *conſcience of him that is weake*, or (which is the ſame) v. 7. and v. 12. the *weake conſcience*] ſignifies the falſe perſwaſion of him that is in an errour, an *erroneous conſcience*, *weakneſſe* noting *ſickneſſe* in the Scripture ſtile *John* 5. 14. 1 *Cor* 11. 30. and errour being the diſeaſe or *ſickneſſe* of the ſoule, and that with a little improvement growing deſtructive and mortiferous; as in caſe he that hath

that erroneous *ſick* conſcience, doe act ſomewhat againſt conſcience, and ſo adde *ſinne* unto *errour*, for then ἀπολεῖται ὁ ἀδυνῶν v. 11. that ſick man dyes, *periſhes* of that *diſeaſe*. So ch. 10, 25, 27, 28, 29. the word *Conſcience* is ſtill in the ſame ſenſe, for conſcience or conſideration of duty, and ſo 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. forementioned.

§. 11. So likewiſe 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. where Baptiſme is called ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεὸν *the anſwer of a good conſcience to God*, the good *conſcience* ſignifies conſcience rightly inſtructed in its duty, as in baptizing thoſe of full age it is ſuppoſed to be; which *Conſcience* is then to *anſwer* and conſent to all Gods propoſals in baptiſme (or the miniſters in Gods ſtead) ſuch as [wilt *thou forſake the Devill, &c.*] and ſo the words will be interpreted in a ſenſe proportionable to that of *denying ungodly luſts*, *Tit.* 2. 12. which there the *appearing* of Chriſt is ſaid to *teach* us. For as *luſt* propoſes *ungodly* queſtions to us, which we are bound to *deny*; ſo God in baptiſme is ſuppoſed to propoſe good queſtions to us, which we are bound to grant, and ſtipulate the performance of them, and that is the ἐπερώτημα *the anſwer of a good conſcience to God* or to his queſtions propoſed in baptiſme, after the manner of ancient pacts among the Romans made by way of queſtion and anſwer, as part of the *ritus ſolennis* or formalities of them.

§. 12. But then for the ſecond acception of the word, as it notes conſcience of what we have performed, or paſſing judgement on my ſelfe for what I have done, (and that either for any one individuall act, or for the maine of our lives, our ſtate; and that againe either 1 *acquitting* or 2 *condemning* or 3 conſidered in a third notion *common* to both thoſe, paſſing ſentence in generall) ſo ſhall you find it in many other places, and indeed in all the reſt which we have not hitherto named.

§. 13. For the firſt of theſe three ſpecies as it *acquitteth*, you have it *Act.* 23. 1. *I have lived*, (or behaved my ſelfe in all my converſation towards men πεπολίτευμαι in all my politique, or publique relations) with or *in all good conſcience*, in ſuch a manner, as I cannot excuſe my ſelfe of any thing done contrary to my Chriſtian profeſſion, or dignity of my Apoſtolicall calling. So 1 *Cor.* 9. 12. the *Teſtimony of our Conſcience* is expreſt by what follows, that *in ſimplicity &c. we had our converſation in the world*. So good conſcience is taken 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. and 19. and 3. 9. and 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. *Heb.* 13. 18. 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. but above all you have a ſpeciall place belonging to this firſt branch of the ſecond in *Act.* 24. 16. [ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν] we render it a *Conſcience void of offence*, the meaning is, a confidence and aſſurance that he hath done nothing ſubject ſo much as to the cenſure of having *ſcandalized* others; for Saint *Paul* being there accuſed by the *Jewes* v. 5. 6. for 3 crimes, *ſedition*, *hereſie*, and *profaning of the Temple*, he anſwers to the firſt v. 12. to the ſecond v. 14. to the third v. 16. 18. and his being purified in the Temple after the Jewiſh manner he makes an evidence of his innocence in that particular, a proofe of his not having ſcandalized any Jew, which to have done would have been a fault in him, whoſe office it was to become *all things to all men, that he might gaine or ſave all*, and not to diſcourage or deter any who might be gained by complyance; and the doing ſo, is it which

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is called being ἀπρόσκοποι Ἰουδαίοις 1 *Cor.*10.32. *giving none offence to the Jews*, the very word in the place of the Acts.

In the ſecond place, the accuſing or condemning conſcience is often mentioned alſo; *John* 8. 9. *Convicted by their conſcience*, or reproved ſome for one ſinne, ſome for another. So by intimation *Heb.* 9. 9. where tis ſaid of the Legall ſacrifices that they could not *make perfect as pertaining to conſcience*, where the word [τελειῶσαι] rendred to *make perfect*, ſignifies in the ſacred idiom [to *conſecrate*,] to make a prieſt, whoſe office being προσέρχεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ *to draw neare to God*, proportionably τελειῶσαι κατὰ συνείδησιν to perfect or *conſecrate* as *pertaining* to *conſcience* ſignifies to give acceſſe with boldneſſe to God, by taking off that guilt which formerly lay upon their conſcience, the ſame that v.14. is called, *to purge the conſcience from dead works*, to waſh off that guilt of ſin paſt, which hinders their approach to God, obſtructs all entrance to their prayers (for *we know that God heareth not ſinners*, *Joh.* 9. 31. and *Iſ.*1.15.) whereupon tis obſervable, that *Heb.*13.18. when he beſpeaks their prayers for him, he adds this reaſon to encourage them to doe ſo. *For we truſt we have a good conſcience*, that good conſcience being neceſſary there to have other mens prayers heard for them, as here to give themſelves *acceſſe* to God in *prayer*. So *Heb.* 10.2. *Conſcience*, or conſciencioſnes *of ſins*, and v.22. *Evill conſcience*, and ſo *Wiſd.*17.11. there is mention of *wickedneſſe condemned by her own witnes and preſt by conſcience.* §.14.

And of the laſt ſort, in the latitude common to both, are *Rom.* 2.15. *Rom.* 9.1. 2 *Cor.*4,2. and 5.11. and 1 *Tim* 4.2. all cleare enough without the help of our paraphraſe to adde light to them. §.15.

Having thus marſhalled all theſe places of Scripture into ranks, and given ſome hints of generall inſight into them, it now remaines that we return a while to the neerer ſurvey of the two generall heads, and firſt of the former acception of the word, as it imports a monitor, or director of life, by which our actions muſt be regulated, and from the miſtaking of which the chiefe inconvenience doth ariſe. §.16.

To which end, it will be abſolutely neceſſary to ſettle and reſolve but one queſtion, what is that rule or κανὼν of Conſcience, from whence it muſt receive its regularion. For he that draweth a line of direction for another, muſt have a rule to draw it by, and that a ſtraight exact one, or elſe the directions will not be authentique, and they *which walke* ἀκριβῶς *exactly* or conſcientiouſly, muſt τῷ κανόνι στοιχεῖν *walk by rule*, *Phil.* 3.16. and τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν *have their eye or thought alway upon that one thing*, their *rule* of direction, or elſe be they never ſuch φιλόσοφοι in the beginning of that verſe, ſuch *forward* proficients, their *end may be perdition* v.19. This when once we have done, the difficulty will ſoone vaniſh. §.17.

And to this purpoſe I ſhall take that for granted which in *theſi* I never heard any doubt of, (though many of our actions look otherwiſe in *hypotheſi*) that *law* is this onely rule; κανὼν and νόμος, rule and law being words of the ſame importance, and nothing fit or proper to regulate our actions, but that which the law-giver, to whom obedience muſt be payed, hath thought fit to rule them by. To which purpoſe it is ordinarily obſerved §.18.

that

that ἁμαρτία, *Sin*, or aberration from that rule by which we ought to walke (for ſo that word naturally ſignifies) is by Saint *John* 1 Epiſt. 3.4. defined ἀνομία which we render *a tranſgreſſion of the law*. In which place of Saint *John*, though the truth is, (ἁμαρτία and ἁμαρτίαν ποιεῖν denoting more then the bare commiſſion of ſinne in that Author generally, viz. the wilfull perpetration of it, and an indulgence in, and habit of ſo doing) the word ἀνομία and ἀνομίαν ποιεῖν muſt proportionably alſo ſignifie not onely tranſgreſſing, but wilfull habituall contemning the Law, being an *exlex*, or without *law* (as the Idolatrous Atheiſt is ſaid to be *without God in the world*) *i. e.* without any account or reſpect of it, (and ſo πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν *Joh.* 31.3. notes the greateſt degree of ſinfulneſſe, we render it *workers of iniquity*, and ſo very frequently in the Septuagint we finde ἀνομία, where we render the Hebrew by *miſchiefe*) yet ſtill the obſervation ſtands good, that law is the rule, in aberration from which all ſinne conſiſts, and ſo ἁμαρτία is ἀνομία in both ſenſes, the leaſt degree of ſinne a deviation from the law, and a malicious contentious ſinning a malitious contemptuous deviation, or tranſgreſſion, and ſo Saint *Paul* hath alſo reſolved it, that where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion, no παράβασις, *Rom.* 4.15. no going awry, when there is no rule propoſed to goe by.

§.19. This being ſo cleare in it ſelfe, and yet through the miſtakes, yea and impieties of the *world* become ſo neceſſary to be thus farther cleared; Two things there are which will hence inevitably follow, the firſt Negative, the ſecond Poſitive; The firſt or the Negative, that Whatſoever undertakes to direct, or guide our actions, to tell us our duty, that this we muſt, that we may not doe, and hath not ſome law, (in force, and ſtill obligatory to us) to authorize thoſe directions by, is not *Conſcience*, whatſoever it is.

§.20. Firſt, Humour it may be, to think our ſelves bound to doe whatſoever we have a ſtrong inclination to doe, it being a matter of ſome difficulty to diſtinguiſh between my naturall and my ſpirituall inclinations, the motion of my ſenſitive appetite, and my diviner principle, my lower, and my upper ſoule, and the former commonly crying louder, and moving more lively, and impatiently, and earneſtly then the other.

§.21. Secondly, Phanſie it may be, which is a kind of irrationall animall Conſcience, hath the ſame relation to ſenſitive repreſentations (*thoſe lawes in the members*) which Conſcience hath to intellectuall (*thoſe lawes of the mind*) and then, as *Ariſtotle* ſaith, *that in* thoſe *creatures which have not reaſon, phanſie ſupplyes the place of reaſon*; ſo they which have not, or will not have conſcience to direct them, phanſie moſt commonly gets into its place. Or

§.22. Thirdly, Paſſion it may be; Our feares will adviſe us one thing, our animoſities another, our zeale a third, and though that be perhaps zeal of God, yet that zeale is a paſſion ſtill, one of thoſe which *Ariſtotle* hath defined in his Rhetoricks, being not καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν, according to knowledge or *conſcience*, *Rom.* 10.2. for the Hebrew word, as I told you, is rendred by thoſe two words promiſcuouſly, ἐπίγνωσις and συνείδησις, *knowledge* and *conſcience*. Or מדע

§.23. Fourthly, diabolicall ſuggeſtion or infuſion it may be, an enthuſiaſm of that

that black ſpirit; as it is, (or of ſome thing as bad in effect) infallibly, whenſoever *Rebellion, Sedition, Murther, Rapine, Hatred, Envy, Uncharitableneſſe, Lying, Swearing, Sacriledge, &c.* come to us under the diſguiſe of Religion and Conſcience; and therefore the *Spirits* muſt be ſearcht *whether they be of God*, or of the Devill; and no ſurer way to doe it, then by theſe and the like Symptomes, theſe fruits and productions of that infernall Spirit, which ſo perfectly repreſent and owne their parent, that none but blind or mad men or dæmoniacks can beleeve them in earneſt to come from God. *Or*

Fiftly, Falſe doctrine it may be, and that againe ſet off either by the authority of the teacher, or by the dignity of ſome eminent followers and practicers of it, and then the Apoſtle calls it [*having mens perſons in admiration*] or by the earlineſſe of its repreſentation, being imbibed and taken in firſt, ſwallowed and digeſted before the truth was offered to us, and then it is prejudice or prepoſſeſſion, and this again alwayes aſſiſted by the force of that old axiom, [*Intus exiſtens &c.*] and by that which is naturall to all habits, to be hardly moveable, and yet further improved ſometimes by pride and obſtinacy, alwayes by ſelfe-love, which makes us think our own opinions (*i. e.* which we are already poſſeſt of) the trueſt; which in this caſe is in effect to think our luck the beſt luck, and the ſame which was obſerved in one worſt ſort of Heathens, who, whatſoever they ſaw firſt in the morning, worſhipt that all the day after; a chooſing of perſwaſions as country men chooſe Valentines, that which they chance to meet with firſt after their coming abroad. §.24.

Beſides theſe, many other things it may be, and ſo, 1. It is oddes enough that it will not be conſcience, which pretends to be ſo, and 2. It is certainly not conſcience, unleſſe it produce ſome law for its rule to direct us by. And this was the *Negative* or *firſt* thing. §.25.

The ſecond or the Poſitive thing which followes from the premiſes, is this, that Conſcience of duty in any particular action is to be ruled by that law which is proper to that action; as for example: The *Chriſtian law* is the rule of Conſcience for Chriſtian actions; the *law of reaſon*, or morall law, for morall; the *law nationall*, municipall, or locall, for civill; the *naturall law of all creatures*, for naturall actions; and the *law of ſcandall*, (a branch of the Chriſtian law) for matters of ſcandall; and the *law of liberty*, for indifferent free actions. And as it is very irregular, and unreaſonable to meaſure any action by a rule that belongs not to it, to try the exactneſſe of the circle by the ſquare, which would be done by the compaſſe, and in like manner to judge the Chriſtianneſſe of an action, by the law of naturall reaſon, which can onely be judged by its conformity with the law of Chriſt, ſuperiour to that of nature; So will there be no juſt pretence of conſcience againſt any thing, but where ſome one or more of theſe lawes are producible againſt it; but on the other ſide, even in the loweſt ſort of actions, if they be regulated by the law proper to them, and nothing done contrary to any ſuperiour law, even by this God ſhall be glorified, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. a kind of glory reſulting to God from that readineſſe of ſubmiſſion and §.26.

ſubordination of every thing to its proper rule, and law, to which the great Creator hath ſubjected it, and of all lawes to that ſupreme tranſcendent one, the law of Chriſt. And though ſome touches there are in the Scripture of each of theſe lawes, ſome *fibræ* or ſtrings of them diſcernibly there, ſo farre, that there is nothing almoſt under any of the heads forementioned, but by the Scripture ſome generall account may be given of it, and againe, though that of Scripture be the ſupreame law of all, and nothing authorizeable by any inferiour law, which is contradicted or prohibited by that, yet is not that of Scripture ſuch a particular Code or Pandect of all lawes, as that every thing which is commanded by any other law, ſhould be found commanded there, or be bound to prove its ſelfe juſtifiable from thence, any further then that it is not there prohibited, or thereby juſtly concluded to be unlawful.

§.27. From whence by the way, I conceive direction may be had, and reſolution of that difficult practicall probleme, what a man may doe in caſe he be legally commanded by his lawfull ſuperiour to doe what he may lawfully doe, which yet he is perſwaded he may not doe, or doubteth whether he may or no. For in this caſe if he be not able to produce ſome plaine prohibition from ſome ſuperiour law, as from that of Scripture, he cannot be truly ſaid to be perſwaded in conſcience, (which implyes knowledge) of the unlawfulneſſe of that thing, nor conſequently hath he any plea for diſobedience to that lawfull command of his Superiours. All that may be ſaid, is, that he may from ſome obſcure place miſunderſtood have cauſe or occaſion to doubt whether he may doe it or no, and then, although doubting ſimply taken (*i.e.* where no command interpoſes,) may keep me from doing what I doubt, yet it ought not to be of that weight, as to keep me from my lawfull Superiours lawfull command, becauſe that very command is a ſufficient ground to ſuperſede my doubting, when I have no plaine prohibition of Scripture to the contrary, (which in this caſe I am ſuppoſed not to have, for if I had, Then, firſt, it were not a lawfull command, and ſecondly, I ſhould not doubt but be aſſured) it being my duty, and part of my Chriſtian meekneſſe, in doubtfull matters to take my reſolution from thoſe whom God hath placed over me, and it being the ſinne of dogmatizing to affirme any thing for me or others to doe, which ſome law of God, &c. ſtill in force, doth not prohibit; which ſin being added to that other of diſobedience to my lawfull Superiours, will ſure never be able to make that commence virtue, which was before ſo far from any pretentions to that title.

§.28. Having proceeded thus far in the ſearch of the ground of Conſcience, 'twere now time to reduce this operation to practice, and ſhew you, firſt, What directions Conſcience is able to afford from every of thoſe lawes for the ruling of all actions of that kind; and ſecondly, What an harmony and conſpiration there is betwixt all theſe lawes, one mutually ayding and aſſiſting the other, and not violating or deſtroying. But this were the largeſt undertaking that could be pitcht on in the whole circle of learning, *Ærodius's Pandectæ rerum ab omni ævo judicatarum*, and all the Schoolmens and Caſuiſts volumes, *de legibus, de jure & juſtitia*, and on the Decalogue, would be but imperfect parts of this; I ſhall give you but one taſte or ἀπὸ of it, by which

which the Reader will be perſwaded to ſpare me, or rather himſelfe that trouble.

The prime of theſe, the Chriſtian law, is the rule of all actions that come within that ſpheare, ſets downe the nature of all Chriſtian duties of *piety*, and *love* of our brethren in generall, and more particularly of *Faith, Hope, Charity, Repentance; ſelfe-denyall, taking up the croſſe*, &c. of *humility, meekneſſe, mercifulneſſe, peaceableneſſe, obedience to* ſuperiours, *patience, contentednesſe*, and the like; and the relation of a Chriſtian being a grand tranſcendent relation, there is no action imaginable, but may either in reſpect of the *matter*, or *motive*, or *principle*, or *circumſtances*, offend againſt one of theſe, (and then, *malum ex qualibet defectu*, the leaſt of theſe defects blemiſheth it) and ſo conſcience directed by that rule or law, will direct me either to doe it, or not to doe it in that manuer, and then tis not any complyance with, or agreeableneſſe to any or all other lawes, which will make this action Chriſtian, which hath any ſuch notable defect or blemiſh in it; Not to purſue this any farther, having thus named it, and ſhewed you the vaſtneſſe of the ſea it leads to, it will ſuffice to our preſent deſigne to tell you, that from what is ſaid theſe 3 corollaries, to omit many others, will be deducible. §.29.

1. That it is not poſſible for Conſcience (be it never ſo ſtrongly perſwaded) to make any action lawfull, which is not regulated by thoſe rules, or lawes which are proper to it, and reconcileable with the grand rule, the Chriſtian law. Conſcience can never transforme *profaneneſſe* into *piety*, *ſacrilege* into *juſtice* or *holineſſe*, *rebellion* into *obedience*, *faction* into *humility*, *perjury*, or taking of unlawful oathes into *religion*, *rapine* into *contentednesſe*, *inhumanity* into *mercifulneſſe*, *adultery*, *fornication*, *divorces*, (ſave in caſe of adultery) or any *uncleanneſſe* into *purity*, *labouring to ſhake a Kingdome*, (to remove the croſſe from my owne ſhoulders to another mans) into *taking up of the Croſſe*; but contrariwiſe, if it be truly and univocally Conſcience of duty, it will tel me that every one of theſe foule titles belongs to every ſuch action (the Scripture being ſo cleare in theſe particulars, that there is no place or excuſe for ignorance or miſtake) and by ſetting before me the *terrors of the Lord*, *perſwade* me not to venture on any one ſuch action upon any termes; or if I have ventured, it will ſmite and wound me for it, and drive me to timely repentance; or if it doe not, tis either a cauterized *inſenſate conſcience*, a *reprobate mind*, or elſe ſome of theſe *Images*, which even now I mentioned, miſtaken for Conſcience; or if it be a *full perſwaſion* of minde, that what I thus am about, I am obliged to doe, (if that be a poſſible thing in ſuch matters and under ſo much light) tis then in the calmeſt ſtyle an erroneous Conſcience, which is ſo far from excuſing me (unleſſe in caſe of ignorance truly invincible, which here is not imaginable) that it brings upon me the moſt unparalleld infelicity in the world, an obligation to ſinne which way ſoever I turne my ſelfe, on one ſide appearing and lying at my doore the guilt of committing that ſinne which I have ſo miſtaken, and on the other the guilt of omitting that (though ſinne) which my Conſcience repreſented to me as dury; and nothing but repentance and reformation §.30.

of judgement firſt, and then of practice, will be able to retrive the one or the other.

§.31. The ſecond corollary will be this, That it is the moſt unreaſonable inſolence in the world, for them that can ſwallow ſuch Camell-ſins as theſe without any regrets, nay with full approbation, and direction (perhaps) of conſcience (if that may be called *Conſcience* which is ſo divided from, and contrary to *knowledge*) yet to ſcruple and interpoſe doubts moſt tremblingly, and moſt conſcientiouſly in matters of indifferency; not ſo much as pretended to be againſt the word of God, (and ſo within the law of chriſtian liberty, that they may be done if he will) and yet over and above their naturall indifferency commanded by that authority, in ſubjection to which the chriſtian vertue of obedience conſiſts; and all this either firſt upon no ground of conſcience at all, but only that it is contrary to their *Phanſy*, their *Humour*, their *Preposſeſſions*; or Secondly becauſe it is a reſtraint, upon their chriſtian liberty, which yet Chriſt never forbid to be reſtrained *quoad exercitium*, *as farre as belongs to the exerciſe of it*, but hath permitted ſometime the care of not *offending the weak brother*, *i. e.* Charity, and ſometime Obedience, to lawfull ſuperiours, to reſtreine it, (for if in things indifferent they may not reſtreine, there can no obedience be payed to them;) or Thirdly becauſe they are offenſive (though not to them, yet) to others, who are perſwaded they are unlawfull. Whereas 1 that perſwaſion of thoſe others is erroneous, and not ſufficient to juſtifie diſobedience in themſelves, much leſſe in other men, in caſe of lawfull humane command, And 2 that their cenſuring of ſuch indifferent actions, *i. e.* being *angry without a cauſe*, may bee greater matter of ſcandall, and ſo more offenſive to others, and more probable to work upon them to bring them by that example to be ſo angry alſo, then the doing that indifferent action, miſtaken by others, and condemned for unlawfull, would be to bring them to tranſcribe that reprobated ſamplar, *i. e.* to doe what they thus condemne; all men being farre more apt and inclinable to break out into paſſions, then into acts againſt conſcience, and ſo more likely to be ſcandalized or offended, or inſnared, by following the former, then the latter example, to ſinne (for company or after another man) by cenſuring whom he cenſures, which is being angry without a cauſe; then by doing what they are adviſed and reſolved they ought not to do, which is ſinning againſt conſcience. Or fourthly, becauſe they are againſt their conſcience to doe, whilſt yet they produce no law of God or man againſt them, and ſo in effect confeſſe there is nothing in them againſt conſcience; unleſſe, as before was noted, they wilfully æquivocate in the word *Conſcience*; which will and skill of theirs, as it will not make any thing, unlawfull, which before was indifferent, ſo will it not conclude ought, ſave only this, that they which are ſo artificious to impoſe on others, and forme ſcruples where there were none, would not be thought the likelieſt men to ſwallow groſſe ſinnes under the diſguiſe of vertues, or if they doe ſo, will have leaſt right to that onely Antidote of invincible ignorance to digeſt them.

§.32. The third corollary will be this, that ſcrupulouſneſſe of conſcience in ſome

ſome lighter leſſe important matters (if it may be ſuppoſed excuſable, as a weakneſſe of an uninſtructed mind, joyned with that good ſymptome of tenderneſſe of quick ſenſe, yet) can never hope to be accepted by God by way of commutation or expiation for greſſer ſinnes, ſo that he that falls foulely in any confeſſed ſinne, ſhould fare the better at the great day of account, or be in leſſe danger of being caſt out of Gods favour for the preſent, becauſe he is over-ſcrupulous in other things: For ſure this were a ſtrange way of ſupererogation to pay one arreare to God by running into another with him, to diſcharge a debt by owing more. And yet this is an errour which may ſeem worth the paines of preventing, it being ſo notoriouſly ſeen, that ſome men, which profeſſe to have care of their wayes, and muſt in charity be beleeved to have ſo, goe on confidently in greivous ſins, which they cannot but know will damne without repentance, (the ſentence of not inheriting the Kingdome of God, *Gal.* 5. being ſo diſtinct, and punctuall, and abſolute, and indiſpenſable againſt them) and yet have no Antidote to relye on for the averting that danger, but only this of their exactneſſe and ſcrupulouſneſſe in things indifferent; which if they ſhall ſay they doe not confide in, they are then obliged in conſcience, and charity to their brethren (who may follow them to this precipice) either to give over hoping, or to ſet to purifying, without which there is no true ground of hope. This hint puts me in mind that there is another part of my deſign ſtill behind, belonging to the ſecond notion of conſcience, to examine

§. 33. What it is that is required to entitle a man to a good conſcience; which will briefly be ſtated by premiſing what before was mentioned, that the good conſcience belongs either to *particular* ſingle performances, or to the *whole ſtate of life* and actions. To the firſt there is no more required, but that that particular action be both for matter and circumſtance regulated by the rule, or rules which are proper to it, and have nothing contrary to any ſuperiour tranſcendent rule. As that my *meale* be with *ſobriety* and *thankſgiving*, my *almes* with *chearfulneſſe*, *liberality*, *diſcretion*, done in *gratitude* and *obedience* to God, and *mercifulneſſe* to my brother, without reflexion on my own *gaine* or *praiſe* in this world. But for *the Good Conſcience*, which belongs to the whole ſtate of life and actions, which is called *a good Conſcience in all things*, *Heb.* 13. 18. or a *good Conſcience* conſiſting in having *a good converſation in all things*, (for ſo the punctation in the Greek will direct rather to render it, [*we have a good conſcience, willing to live well*, (or have an honeſt converſation) *in all things*] there the difficulty will be greater. And yet two Texts there are which tend much to the clearing and diſinvolving of that one, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. where ἀγαθὴ συνείδησις, *Good Conſcience* in the beginning of the verſe, is explained in the cloſe by ἀγαθὴ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφή, *a good converſation in Chriſt*, or a good chriſtian converſation, or ſuch as now through Chriſt, by the purport of the ſecond covenant may and ſhall be accepted for good. Where the word [*converſation*] denoting firſt the actions and behaviour both toward God and man, and ſecondly, the whole courſe and frame of thoſe actions, (wherein it ſeems a good conſcience conſiſts,) cannot better be explained then either by the

καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἐν πᾶσι καλῶς θέλοντες ἀναστρέφεσθαι.

Apoſtles, ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖν, an *accurate exact walking*, *Eph.*1.15. or the phraſe to *Titus*, *c.*2.12. *living ſoberly and righteouſly and godly in this preſent world*; the firſt reſpecting our duty to our ſelves, or actions, as private men; the ſecond, our duty to our brethren, in our more publique capacities; the third, our duty to God as creatures, men, and Chriſtians; or Saint *Lukes* character of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, *Luk.*1.6. *Walking in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſſe*; *walking Blameleſſe*, *In all*: *Univerſall ſincere obedience*, (not entire or perfect without ever ſinning, but) conſidered with the rules of ἐπιείκεια, or *moderation of ſtrict law*, (which is now part of the νόμῳ πίστεως, the *Goſpel-law*, by which a Chriſtian is to be tryed, as *equity* is a part of the *municipall law* of this land; Such is mercy for frailties, and infirmities, and groſſer lapſes recovered and retracted by repentance) now under the Goſpel, ſo as to be acceptable to God in Chriſt; which was intimated (as in the ἐν χριστῷ, *in Chriſt*, 1 *Pet.*3. ſo) in the former part of that verſe, and their character δίκαιοι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, *righteous before God*: Which phraſe [*Before God*] hath a double intimation worth obſerving in this place, firſt of the perſeverance or perpetuity of that righteouſneſſe (as oppoſed to the temporary of the hypocrite) for the phraſe ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ [*before him*] refers to the ſhew bread of old, *Exod.*25.30. *which was to be ſet before God alway*; and therefore is ſometime called לחם פנים the *bread of faces*, or לפני *bread before his face*, literally ἐνώπιον, *before him*, and ſometimes לחם התמיד *perpetuall bread*, and ſecondly, of the acceptation or reception in the ſight of God, for that againe was the end of ſetting the *bread alwayes before God*, that God looking on it might accept them; and ſo *righteouſneſſe before God*, is ſuch righteouſneſſe as God will pleaſe in the Goſpel to accept of, as when *viſiting the fatherleſſe*, &c. *Jac.* 1.27. is called, *religion pure and undefiled before God the Father*; it noteth ſuch a degree of unblemiſht purity, not as excluded all ſinne, but as God in Chriſt would (or hath promiſed to) accept of. And the ſame phraſe therefore is in another place of the ſame Chapter, *Luk.* 1.75. rendred by our Church in the Goſpel for Midſummer day by theſe words, *ſuch as may be acceptable for him.*

§.34. Which being all taken into the deſcription of a good conſcience, that *it is ſuch a continued good converſation as God now under the Goſpel promiſeth to accept of*; the onely difficulty behind will be, what that is which God promiſeth to accept of; To which end, it will be very inſtrumentall to take in that other place which I promiſed, and that is that forementioned, *Heb.* 13. 18. where the *Good Conſcience* is evidenced (or the ground of confidence that he hath a good conſcience, demonſtrated) by this [ἐν πᾶσι καλῶς θέλοντες ἀναστρέφεσθαι] *willing*, or reſolving, or endeavouring *to live honeſtly*, or to have honeſt converſation *in all things*. From whence the onely thing which I deſire to collect is this, That the *ſincere reſolution or endeavour to live honeſtly in all things* (which I remember, one of our ancienteſt Church-writers Saint *Cyrill* of *Jeruſalem* calls, θέλημα δικαιοπραγεῖν, and oppoſes it to ἔργον, works) *is the Scripture-nomination of a good Conſcience*, or the

μέγας

μέγας παῤῥησίας θησαυρὸς, *that great treasure of confidence* to all which have it; that ground of mature perswasion for any, that he hath, or shall by God be allowed, and acknowledged to have a *good conscience.*

And if it be farther demanded what is necessarily required, (and how much will be sufficient) to denominate a man Such, what is the *minimum quod sic* of this sincere resolution, or endeavour, although that, I confesse, will be hard if not impossible, to define in such a manner, as shall come home to every particular, (the proportions of more or lesse, *knowledge* or *strength*, the inequality of the talents of *illuminating* and *assisting* grace still interposing and making a variation) yet will it not be matter of much difficulty to give some generall advertisements, and προλήψεις, which will be acknowledged as soone as mentioned, and being put together, and by each man single applyed to his particular case, by way of self examination, will be able to tell him in some measure, whether he hath a good conscience or no. And the first of these will be, That §.35.

Acts and habits of sinne in the former (heathen or unregenerate) part of the life, of what nature (and clothed with what aggravations) soever, if they are now retracted and renounced by repentance (as that signifies not onely a *sorrow*, but a thorow *change*) are reconcileable with a good conscience. The truth of which is cleare, first, because the Gospel allowes place for *repentance*, and promises *rest to the heavy laden*, so he *come unto Christ*, and *mercy* to him that *confesseth and forsaketh*. Secondly, because the sincerity of resolution and endeavour *now*, (which is all that is required to a present good conscience) is reconcileable with *past sins*, even of the largest size. Thirdly, because Saint *Paul* himselfe, which was once a *Saul*, can yet say confidently, that *he hath a good conscience*. And fourthly, because (which I shal a little enlarge on) the sinne against the holy Ghost, which alone is by the Gospel made uncapable of remission, is, as I conceive, no act, no nor course of any speciall sinne, but a state of final impenitence, a continued persevering resistance of all those saving methods which are consequent to the descent, and are part of the office of the holy Ghost. §.36. ματαμέλεια μετάνοια.

To which purpose I shall give you one hint which may perswade the preferring of this opinion before the contrary, and it is by observing the occasion of Christs delivering those words concerning the irremissiblenesse of speaking against the holy Ghost. Those words are delivered by Christ both in Saint *Matthew* and Saint *Mark* upon occasion of that speech of the Jewes, that Christ *cast out Devils, by the Prince of Devils*, which was clearly a blaspheming or speaking contumeliously against Christ himselfe, or the *sonne of man*, and there is no passage in the Text which can conclude that that speech of theirs was by Christ called the *blasphemy against the holy Ghost*, but rather the contrary that it was a *blasphemy onely against the sonne of man*; for tis apparent that Christ *Mat.* 12. 15. for the space of six verses sets himselfe to convince them of the falsity of that speech (which probably he would not have done, if they, to whom he spake had been in an irrecoverable irreversible estate of blasphemy. For that he should take such paines onely to leave them unexcusable, 1. there was no great need, in this case they §. 37.

were

were ſo already. 2. it is a miſtake to think that Chriſt doth ſo at any time, they are bowels of mercy and not deſignes of miſchieving, or accumulating their ſinne, and judgements, which incline him to call and knock, and labour to convince ſinners) and having done that, doth both invite them to repentance by ſhewing them the poſſibility of pardon yet, and give them an admonition able to ſhake them out of all impenitence, by telling them the danger which attended, if the only laſt method of working on them which was yet behind, did not proſper with or work upon them, This is the importance of that 31 and 32 verſe concerning *the ſpeaking a word, i. e.* ſtanding out *againſt the ſonne of man* on one ſide, and *the Holy Ghoſt* on the other; the ſumme of which is this, there ſhall be by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt a poſſibility of pardon and meanes of reformation for thoſe that reſiſt and hold out and even crucifie Chriſt (as by the coming of Chriſt, there was for thoſe that ſhould beleive on him, though they had formerly lived diſobedient unto God the Father, reſiſted thoſe methods of mercy uſed on them under the old Teſtament) for *them that ſpeak a word. i. e.* by an Hebraiſme doe an action (of affront, of injury, of contumely) *againſt Chriſt*, yea that reſiſt and beleive not on him, but conceive and affirme him to *caſt out Divels by the power of Beelzebub*, (which was as contumelious a thing as could be ſaid of him) but when Chriſt ſhall be taken from the earth, and the Holy Ghoſt ſhall be ſent down to convince the world of that great ſinne of crucifying Chriſt, and to ſettle in the Church of God ſuch an orderly uſe of all Goſpell-meanes that may tend to the bringing ſinners to repentance (the uſe both of the *word* and *ſacrament* and *cenſures* and all other things neceſſary to that great end of working on the moſt contumacious) that if this prevaile not, there is little hope left of ever working on ſuch perverſeneſſe, then it is to be reſolved, that thoſe that thus ſtand out againſt all thoſe ſaving methods of Gods laſt œconomy, ſhall be left uncapable of any good, of any whether meanes of yet-farther-working on them, or of pardon either in the Church or in heaven, there being no more perſons in the God-head now behind (unleſſe we will change the chriſtians Trinity into Pythagoraſſes τετρακτυς) nor conſequently meanes in the providence of God, for the reducing of, or obtaining mercy for ſuch. By this it will appeare that this blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt is not any one act no nor habit of ſin (particularly not that ſpeaking againſt Chriſt there, which you will alſo gueſſe by Saint *Luke*, who mentions not that ſpeech of theirs concerning his caſting out Divels by the Prince of Divels, and yet ſets down this ſpeech of Chriſt, of the irremiſſibility of this blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, *Luke* 12. 10. which argues that this hath no neare relation to that) but a finall holding out againſt, and reſiſting the whole office of the Holy Ghoſt, and all thoſe gracious methods conſequent to it.

§. 38. To which I ſhall only adde in reference to my preſent purpoſe (that there may be no place of doubting even to him which will not receive my interpretation of this place) that even by thoſe which conceive it to be ſome ſpeciall kind of ſinne, yet the unpardonableneſſe of it is acknowledged to ariſe from thence, that it is impoſſible for any ſuch to repent, yet not for

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any that repents to find pardon and mercy, which is ſufficient for the confirmation of my preſent propoſition.

'Tis true indeed, that he that is ſold a ſlave of ſinne, the unregenerate carnall man, is, whilſt he is ſo, in a moſt hopeleſſe, comfortleſſe eſtate, and if he have any naturall conſcience left him, it muſt needs be a kind of feind and fury with him, *No peace to ſuch wicked, ſaith my God*, and it is as true that the recovery of ſuch a man out of the grave of rottenneſſe, that Lazar-ſtate in ſinne, is a miracle of the firſt magnitude, a work of greateſt difficulty (Chriſt *groanes* at the raiſing of him that was 4 *dayes* dead *and putrified in the grave*) and coſts the ſinner much dearer to be raiſed out of it. *Saul is ſtrucke down* in his march towards *Damaſcus*, *blind* and *trembling* before his converſion; but yet ſtill when this converſion is wrought, he may have a *good Conſcience* what ever his foregoing ſins were.

§. 39. And although the Apoſtles Cenſure *Heb. 6. 6.* and 10. 26. light yet heavier upon thoſe who after *the knowledge of the truth and guſt of the life to come, and participation of the holy ſpirit relapſe* to their former *ſinnes*, it being there affirmed that there is no *poſſibility to renew* them, or (as the Greeks read it) *for them to renew* or recover *to repentance*, and conſequently *the ſacrifice for* ſinne [οὐκ ἔτι ἀπολείπεται] no longer belonging to or *remaining for them*, yet doth not this hinder the truth of the preſent propoſition; for 1 thoſe places to the Hebrews belong not to the ſins of the unregenerate life, which only now we ſpeak of, but of the relapſe after the knowledge of the truth, 2. even in thoſe places ſpeaking of thoſe ſinnes, the doctrine is not, that there ſhall be any difficulty of obtaining pardon for them upon repentance, (for the Subject of the Apoſtles Propoſitions is the φωτισθέντες and ἁμαρτάνοντες men conſidered excluſively to repentance, as abiding in ſinne unreformed impenitent, and to ſuch we deſigne not to allow mercy) but that this is ſo great a grieving and quenching of the ſpirit of God, that it becometh very difficult, and in ordinary courſe *impoſſible* for them that are guilty of it to repent, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν *again to recover to repentance*: It being juſt and ordinary with God upon ſuch ſinnes of thoſe to whom he hath given grace, to withdraw that grace againe, according to his method and œconomy of providence expreſt in the parable of the talents, [*from him that hath not* made uſe of the grace or talent given, *ſhall be taken away even that which he hath*] and *Wiſd.* 1. 5. *the holy ſpirit of diſcipline will not abide where unrighteouſneſſe cometh in*; and ſo being thus deprived of that grace, it is conſequently impoſſible that thoſe ſhould ἀνακαινίζειν, in a neutrall ſenſe, *renew* and *recover*, or in an active reciprocall *renew or recover themſelves to repentance*, though yet for God to give a new ſtock of grace it is not impoſſible, but only a thing which he hath not by revealed promiſe obliged himſelfe to do; and therefore whether he will doe it or no, is meerly in his own hand and diſpoſitive power, and that which no man hath ground to hope and title to challenge from him. All which notwithſtanding our preſent propoſition ſtands firm, that where there is repentance, or true thorow change, thoſe former retracted acts or habits are reconcileable with good Conſcience.

ἀνακαινί-ζειν.

§.40. The ſecond this, that *Sinnes of weakneſſe of all kinds*, whether firſt, of ignorance, or ſecondly, of naturall infirmity, the one for want of light, the other for want of grace, or thirdly, of ſuddaine ſurreption, ſuch as both by the law of [*Si quis præcipiti calore*] in the Code of *Iuſtinian*, and by the municipal laws of moſt nations, are matter of extenuation to ſome crimes, to diſcharge them from capitall puniſhment, at leaſt to make them capable of pardon, or fourthly, of dayly continuall incurſion, either for want of ſpace to deliberate at all, or becauſe it is morally impoſſible to be upon the guard to be deliberate always, (*opere in longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum*) or fiftly, which through levity of the matter paſſes by undiſcerned, and the like, are irreconcileable with a good conſcience, becauſe againe, be a man never ſo ſincerely reſolute and induſtrious in endeavour to abſtaine from all ſinne, yet as long as he carries *fleſh* about him, (which is ſuch a principle of weakneſſe, that ordinarily in the New Teſtament, the word *fleſh*, is ſet to ſignifie *weakneſſe*) ſuch weakneſſes he will be ſubject to, ſuch frailties will be ſure to drop from him. This, I remember, *Pariſienſis* illuſtrates handſomely, firſt, by the ſimilitude of an armed man provided with ſtrength and proweſſe, and wreſtling with another *in lubrico*, on a ſlippery ground, who though neither weapons nor ſtrength nor courage faile him, yet may he very probably fall, the ſlipperineſſe of the footing will betray him to that; or ſecondly by an horſeman mounted on an unmanaged or tender-mouth'd horſe, who cannot with all his skill and caution ſecure himſelfe from all miſadventures, the beaſt may upon a check come over with him, or getting the bit into the mouth runne into the enemies quarters; or thirdly, by a City that is provided for a ſiege with workes, and men, and victuals, and ammunition, and yet by a treacherous party within may be betrayed into the enemies hands; there is a principle of weakneſſe within like that ſlippery pavement, that tender-mouthed beaſt, that inſidious party, which will make us ſtill lyable to ſuch miſcarriages, and nothing in this contrary either to courage or diligence, to reſolution, or endeavour. And for ſuch as theſe frailties, ignorances, infirmities, &c. So they be laboured againſt, and the meanes of preventing or overcomming them ſincerely uſed (which if it be done, you ſhall find them dayly wain in you, and if they doe not ſo in ſome meaſure, you have reaſon to ſuſpect, and to double your diligence) there is ſure mercy in Chriſt to be had, obtaineable, by dayly confeſſion, and ſorrow, and prayer for forgiveneſſe of treſpaſſes) without any compleat conqueſt atchieved over them in this life. It being Saint *Pauls* affirmation, very exactly and critically ſet downe, *Rom.* 5. 6. that Chriſt ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν ἔτι γὰρ ἀσθενῶν ὄντων, *we being weake*, dyed for the ungodly, to note the univerſal benefit of his death for ſuch *weak ones* and ſuch ſinnes as theſe to which meer *weakneſſe* betrayes them. The very doctrine which from that text at the beginning of our refor-
Hooper. mation our Reverend Biſhop Martyr did aſſert in his excellent Preface to his explication of the commandements.

§.41. To which purpoſe I ſhall onely adde one proofe more, taken from the τὸ λογικὸν or rationall importance of Saint *Pauls* exhortation *Rom.* 15. 1. *we that are ſtrong*, ſaith he, *muſt beare the weakneſſes*, ἀδυνάματα, *of them*

which

which are not strong, ἀδυνατων, and not please *our selves*, for v.3. *Christ did not so, but* &c. which reason sure must come home to both parts, the affirmative as well as the negative (or else the Logick will not be good) and so the affirmative be that *Christ bare the infirmities of the weake*; and so again *v.7.* [προσελάβετο ἡμᾶς] applyed to the same matter *he took us up when we were thus fallen.* I might adde more, but I hope rather that I have said too much in so plaine a point, and abundantly evinced the irreconcileablenesse of such frailties with a good conscience.

A third thing is, that *The lusting of the flesh against the spirit* is reconcileable with a good conscience, so it be in him that *walketh in the spirit*, obeys the desires and dictates of that, and *fulfilleth not the lusts of the flesh*, *Gal.* 5. 16, 17. There is no spiritually good thing that a man ever doth in his life, but the flesh hath some mutinyings, lustings, and objections against it, there being such a contrariety betwixt the commands of Christ and the desires of the flesh, that no man, which hath those two within him, *doth* the things that he would. (For so tis, ἵνα μὴ ποιῆτε *that you doe not*, not that you cannot doe) [*The things that he would*] (*i. e.* the things, which either he resolves to doe, or takes delight in) those he doth not, *i. e.* either purely without some mixture, or still without some opposition of the contrary, or (as againe the place may be rendred) this opposition of these two one against another tendeth to this, that we may not doe, or to hinder us from doing every thing that we would, as indeed we should doe, were there not that opposition within our owne brests. This is the meaning of that 17 verse, which notwithstanding it followes verse 18. that *if we be led by the spirit*, if that be victorious over the contrary pretender (as it may, though tother lust against it) if the production be not *works of the flesh, adultery*, &c. v.19. but the *fruit of the spirit love, peace*, &c. v.22. *against such there is no law, no condemnation*, no accusation of conscience here, or hereafter. §.42.

For it must be observed, that there is great difference betwixt *this lusting of the flesh against the* spirit in them that are *led by the spirit*, *Gal.* 5. and the *warring of the law in the members against the law in the mind*, which *bringeth into captivity to the law of sin*, *i. e.* to it selfe, *Rom.* 7. For those in whom that latter is to be found, are there said to be *carnall*, sold under sinne (as a slave was wont *sub hasta* to be sold) and so ἄγεσθαι ὑπὸ σαρκὸς to be led by the flesh and fulfill the lusts of the flesh, which is of all things most unreconcileable with that mans state, against whom *there is no condemnation in Christ*, *Rom.* 8. 1. and so with a *good Conscience.* §.43.

And if the resistance of the *minde*, or the *law morall*, of the *spirit*, or the *law Christian*, be sufficient to excuse that action or habituall course which is committed and lived in, in opposition to both of these, or while both of these check and contradict, then sure are sins against conscience become (if not the most excusable sinnes, yet) the more excusable for this, that they are against conscience; that woulding or contending of the *mind*, or the *law of the mind* being no other but the dictate of the instructed conscience, (in them which know the law, *Rom.* 7. 1. which he that obeyes not, but followes the law or command of sin against it, hath not sure a good conscience, in our second sence §.44.

as that ſignifies a Conſcience of well-doing or doing nothing againſt rule of Conſcience, for that this man *in terminis* is ſuppoſed to doe.

§.45. Having now proceeded thus farre in the affirmative part in ſhewing what ſinnes are reconcileable with a good Conſcience, I ſhould now proceed to the negative part and ſhew what are not reconcileable therewith. But before I advance to that, there is one claſſis or head of ſinnes, about which there is ſome queſtion and difficulty of reſolving, to which of the extreames it ſhould be reduced, *i. e.* whether it be reconcileable, or unreconcileable with a good Conſcience. And that is the ſingle Commiſſion of ſome act of knowne ſinne, which hath not the Apology of weaknеſſe to excuſe it, and yet is not indulged or perſiſted, or continued in, (for of thoſe that are ſo, you ſhall hear anon in the 8 Propoſition) but without delay retracted by humiliation and reformation; For the ſtating and ſatisfying of which it will be neceſſary firſt, to obſerve that

§.46. Any ſuch act of wilfull ſinne *Firſt*, hath in it ſelfe a being, and ſo is capable of a notion abſtracted from the retraction of it. Yea ſecondly, is a work of ſome time, and though it be never ſo ſuddenly retracted by repentance, yet ſome ſpace there is before that retractation; and if we ſpeak of that time or ſpace, there is no doubt, but that act, firſt, is contrary to good conſcience, and contracts a guilt, and conſequent to that, the diſpleaſure of God and obligation to puniſhment, which nothing but repentance can do away; yea and ſecondly, is a naturall means of weakning that habit of good, of ſauciating and wounding the ſoule, and for that time putting it in a bloody direfull condition, and ſhould God before repentance ſtrike, for ought we know there would be no remiſſion, and ſo, fearfull would be the end of that ſoule.

§.47. But then ſecondly, if before God thus viſit in juſtice, repentance interpoſe, (as in this preſent caſe we ſuppoſe it doth) if this plank be caught hold on inſtantly upon the ſhipwrack, if he that hath committed this act of carnality, &c. lye not down (after the manner of the Grecian horſes in Saint *Ambroſes* expreſſion, *qui cum ceciderint, quandam tenent quietis & patientiæ diſciplinam, are taught, when they fall in the race, not to ſtrive or endeavour to get up again*, lye ſtill on the ground with great *ſtilneſſe and patience*) *walk not after the fleſh, Ro.*8.1. Then preſently is he ſet right again in Gods favour, upon (performance of the ſolemnities, as it were, payment of the fees of the Court) humiliation, contrition, confeſſion, and lowly ſupplications to God for pardon in Chriſt, and ſo then to him thus repaired there is *no condemnation*; beſide the forementioned effects that attended that ſinne at the time there is no future arrear behind in the other world.

§.48. As for the other effect of ſinne in this life, the waſting of the Conſcience, or provoking of God to withdraw his grace; though any ſuch act of wilfull ſinne may juſtly be thought to do that alſo in ſome degree, firſt, to ſtop God from going on in his current of liberality, and ſecondly, to caſt us back from that plenitude and abundance, which before in the riches of Gods bounty in Chriſt was afforded, and ſo much weaken our ſtock of grace, leave us much more infirme then wee were before the Commiſſion; yet wee find

find not any threat in Scripture that God will, upon this provocation of one ſingle act not perſiſted in, preſently withdraw all grace, but we have reaſon to hope what the Article of our Church ſuppoſes, that in this caſe he leaves ſufficient grace to enable that *child* of his, that thus *falls*, *by* that his *grace to return again*.

And if that ſad preſage, *Heb. 6. 6.* ſeem to any to withſtand this, the anſwer will be prompt and eaſy, by obſerving that the word παραπεσόντες, there [*the fallers away*] ſignifies more then ſome one ſingle act of ſinne preſently retracted againe, even a generall Apoſtacie in their practice, (if not in their faith) a return to their former unregenerate ſinnes, (as the phraſe ἐμπλακέντες ἡττῶνται, [*they being entangled are overcome*] notes 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. a place perfectly paralell to this, and) as in this place the ancients have generally interpreted. And then though ſuch indulgence in ſinne, ſuch *returning to the vomit or mire againe* in that other place, doe provoke God to withdraw his grace neceſſary to enable them to repent, yea and caſt them back into a *worſe* eſtate then they were in, not onely before ſuch ſinning, but even before their converſion, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. Yet that God will ſo puniſh with totall deſertion any one act or commiſſion preſently retracted againe, it is not affirmed here nor any where elſe, that I have obſerved, but rather on the contrary, that he will viſit them with chaſtiſements which are a *grace* and a meanes to recall them, without any utter *forſaking or taking of his loving kindneſſe from them*, Pſal. 89. 33. 35. §. 49.

That this matter may be throughly cleared, I ſhall ſuppoſe this objection made againſt what hath hitherto been ſaid of it, that it may ſeem by this doctrine, [that the regenerate man may bee under Gods diſpleaſure] that hee that remaines ſanctified may be unjuſtified, for ſo he will be, if all his ſinnes be not forgiven him, which they are not, if this act of ſinne not yet repented of, be not forgiven. In anſwer to this, I ſhall reinforce my affirmation, that of neceſſity it muſt be granted, if we believe the Scripture, that any ſuch act of ſinne unretracted by repentance, doth certainly ſtand upon the ſinners ſcore unremitted; for that God (as ſome affirme) doth at the firſt act of my being juſtified, forgive all my ſinnes not only paſt, preſent, but alſo future too; cannot be ſaid, but upon a ſuppoſition that that man will never commit any ſuch ſinne againſt which the Goſpell threatens periſhing, *i. e.* any deliberate preſumptuous ſinne, (which ſuppoſition if it were true, would inferre an impoſſibility of the regenerate mans thus ſinning, not an aſſurance of his pardon without (or abſtracted from the conſideration of) his repentance, which is the only point, in hand) for if he doe, then upon confeſſion and forſaking there is promiſe of mercy, and not otherwiſe; and in briefe, without repentance there is no remiſſion: and therefore it is obſerveable, that they which thus affirm, find themſelves enforced to fly to Gods omnipotence and immensity, to whom all things are preſent; by help of which they can conceive and reſolve that at the time of that ſinnes being upon him unrepented of, God yet ſeeing his future repentance as preſent, may ſeale his pardon, and then may by the ſame reaſon do ſo alſo before the commiſſion; the weakneſſe of which arguing, I ſhall no farther de- §. 50.

monstrate then by this rejoynder, that by the same reason it might be said, that a man is justified before he is borne, which yet the objectors doe not affirme, but that at the time of his first conversion, be it at such a Sermon or the like, he was justified, and then all his sins past, present, and to come forgiven him, which is as contrary to the notion of all things being present with God, as to say that this act of commission is not forgiven till it be repented of, for sure the time before that mans birth, and the time after it, are as truly present to God before all eternity, as the time of this commission and that repentance.

§.51. The onely way for us to understand our selves or any thing that belongs to Gods actions concerning us, is that which the Scripture supposes and commands us to walk in, not the way of Gods secret counsels, (which if we knew, were no longer secret) not the way of Gods immensity, (which if it were intelligible by us, were not immensity) but the way of his revealed will, which is, that whensoever the sinner *repenteth* him of his sinne, and *amends* his life, he shall have his sin *blotted out* and *put out of Gods remembrance*, *i. e.* forgiven unto him and not till then: and to suppose he may have remission before such repentance, is to suppose God perjured who sweares he shall not, and to lay falsity to the charge of the whole Gospel, which resolves, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.*

§.52. To all this I might farther adde that Gods justifying the faithfull man, is the approving his fidelity upon tryall of it, and so acquitting him (upon a *δοκιμη* or probation) from suspicion of hypocrisie, pronouncing him faithful, or Evangelically righteous, and upon that, owning him as a friend, entring into League with him, as might appeare by Gods *justifying Abraham and calling him friend* (in the sense wherein they are Christs *friends*, *which doe whatsoever he commands them*, so approve themselves unto him) if it were now seasonable to examine that businesse. This being supposed, it would be most evident, that such an act of knowne deliberate sinne committed in time of tryall, is quite contrary to *justification*, even as contrary as *Abrahams* refusing to beleeve Gods promise first, or after to sacrifice *Isaac*, you may suppose would have been. Of which the least that can be said, will be this, that such a failing is a shrewd blemish to sincerity, which will make it necessary for him that is guilty of it, to repaire his credit with God by expressing a great sence of his miscarriage, and by many future performances of constancy, and resolution, if ever he hope to be approved, or *justified by him.*

§.53. But now having thus far confirmed this, and so rather strengthned, then weakned the objection, the next thing I shall desire may be observed is this, that every non-remission of a sinne for some time, every displeasure of Gods, every not-imputing to righteousnesse, is not an utter intercision of justification, is not a calling all the former forgotten sinnes to remembrance, for to such onely an Apostacy, or continued falling away from God betrayes the soule. For, the whole current of my life may approve my fidelity to God, though some one action be very contrary to it: Nay secondly, a Father may be displeased with his Sonne for some one fault, and yet not disinherit him, nay upon farther provocation he may cast him out

of

of his family, and yet afterward receive him into it againe.

So that there are three degrees obſervable in this matter, firſt diſpleaſure, ſecondly wrath, thirdly fury. Firſt withdrawing of the Fathers favour, ſuſpenſion of pardon, ſo tis in caſe of any ſuch ſingle act of ſinne pretently repented of, conſidered before its retractation. Second, caſting out of the family, totall interciſion of mercy for that preſent, ſo tis in caſe of ſuch ſin perſiſted in indulgently. Third, utter finall irreverſible abdication, ſo tis in caſe of finall obduration. §. 54.

This may be illuſtrated, 1. by a vulgar, then by an eccleſiaſticall reſemblance. Among friends 1. there may be a matter of quarrell, diſlike, diſpleaſure, and one friend juſtly frowne upon the other, yea and keep ſome diſtance from him, and be really angry with him, for ſome act of injury done by him, contrary to the lawes of friendſhip, which till he hath ſome way repaired, the friend may juſtly not pardon him, and ſo abſteine for that preſent from the former degree of familiarity with him: but then 2. the injurious friend may continue as injurious ſtill, and go on and perſiſt in that courſe of falſeneſſe or unfriendlineſſe, and then the injur'd friend wholly forſakes his company, breaks off thoſe bands of friendſhip with him, yet ſo as that upon the others relenting and amending, he may yet againe returne to him, and ſo that totall ſeparation prove no finall one, 3. there is, upon obduration or no manner of relenting, a finall irreverſible breach. §. 55.

The eccleſiaſticall reſemblance is, that of the three degrees of excommunication among the Jewes, the firſt or loweſt, was *niddui* ſeparation, not totall turning out of either ſacred or civill ſociety, but remotion to a diſtance, that the offender ſhould not come within foure Cubits of any other, and ſo be denyed the peace of the Church, and the familiar kind of communion, which others enjoy. Above this there was *cherem* which was a totall excluſion or diſtermination with anathemas or execrations joyned with it, but yet was not finall, then thirdly there was *Schammatha* giving up to deſtruction or deſolation, delivering up to Gods comming in judgement, and that was irreverſible. §. 56.

Now for the full ſatisfying of the argument, (having already ſhewed you the ſtate of this offender in reſpect of juſtification) it will onely be neceſſary to adde one thing more, that the ſtate of the ſame man as it reſpects ſanctification, is parallel and fully proportionable to the ſtate as it reſpecteth juſtification, and ſo the objection will quite fall to the ground. §. 57.

To the clearing of which you muſt know that ſanctification may be conceived in a double notion: 1. as a gift of Gods, 2. as a duty of mans. To prevent miſtake, this I meane, God gives the grace of converſion and ſanctification, and he that is effectually wrought on by that grace, is converted and ſanctified, this is it which I meane, by the firſt notion of ſanctification, as it is a gift of Gods: But the man thus converted and ſanctfied, *i. e.* thus wrought on and effectually changed by the Spirit of God, is bound by the Goſpl-law, to operate according to this principle, to uſe this talent, and this is called, *to have grace*, *Heb.* 12. 28 *i. e.* to make uſe of it to the purpoſe there ſpecified of *ſerving God* εὐαρέστως (*i. e.* either *well pleaſedly*, cheerfully, willingly, §. 58.

lingly, or *well pleaſingly*, ſo as God may and will accept) *in righteouſneſſe and godly ſtate*, according to the notion of *Having* in the parable of the talents, where tis ſaid that *to him that hath ſhall be given*, *i. e.* to him which makes uſe of the talent intruſted to him, operates accordingly, doth what that enables him to doe, offends not againſt it by idleneſſe, or by commiſſion of contrary ſinnes, which he that doth, is the *non habens*, *he that hath not* there, from *which ſhall be taken away*, &c. And this having of grace is it which I meane by the ſecond notion of ſanctification, as it is a duty of mans, which I conceive is meant by the Apoſtle, when he ſaith, this *is the will of God, even your Sanctification*, and *he which hath this hope purifies himſelf*, and *let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſſes perfecting holineſſe*, all which places ſuppoſe the thing ſpoken of, to be the *duty* of man, which by the help of Chriſt *ſtrengthning* him, he is *able* to performe, and therefore upon the ſuppoſition of *Gods working in him both to will and to doe*, to will, by ſanctifying, to doe, by aſſiſting grace, he is incited and exhorted by the Apoſtle, *to work out his owne ſalvation*.

§. 59. This being thus cleared, twill be eaſily granted in the ſecond place, that every ſuch act of deliberate commiſſion as we now ſpeak of, is contrary to ſanctification in this latter notion, contrary to the *duty* of the ſanctified man, from which breach of duty it was, that we bound him before under that guilt, which nothing but repentance could rid him of, and if you mark it, that is the onely thing which contracts a guilt, the doing ſomewhat contrary to *duty*, and ſo the want of this ſecond notion of Sanctification it is, the want of ſanctified operations, which interpoſes any rubs in the buſineſſe of our juſtification, and not ſo properly that wherein God onely was concerned, his not giving *grace*, guilt being ſtill a reſult from ſinne, and ſinne being a *breach of the law*, a contrariety to duty and not to guilt; and though he that hath not received the gift of ſanctification be not juſtified, yet the cauſe of his non-juſtification then, is not, in proper ſpeaking, Gods not having given him grace to ſanctifie, (for that is but a negative thing, and cannot produce non-juſtification, which is in effect a poſitive thing by interpretation, ſignifying condemnation, two negatives making an affirmative, non-juſtifying being non-remitting of ſinne, and that the actuall imputing of it to condemnation) but the ſinnes of his former and preſent impenitent unſanctified life.

§. 60. This alſo being thus cleared, I ſhall onely adde a third thing, and then conclude this matter, that in the ſame proportion that any ſuch act of ſinne doth unjuſtifie, it doth unſanctifie alſo, *i. e.* ſhake and waſte, though not utterly deſtroy, that ſanctified ſtate that before the man was in, by the gift and grace of God.

§. 61. For as there were three degrees of provocation in the matter of juſtification, ſo are there alſo in this of ſanctification, the firſt, *grieving the Spirit of God*, *Eph.* 4. 30. reſiſting it, trashing of God in his courſe of grace and bounty towards us, putting our ſelves under *niddui*, as it were, in reſpect of Gods grace, as well as his favour, and ſo weakning our ſtock of ſanctity, and this the deliberate act of ſinne may be thought to doe. The ſecond, is

quenching

quenching of the Spirit, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 19. putting it quite out, *rebelling and vexing his holy Spirit*, *Iſ.* 63. 10. a totall extinction of grace, the *Cherem* that brings the preſent curſe, or *anathema* along with it; and this is not done by one ſin not perſiſted in, but onely by a habit or indulgent courſe of ſin; and the third, is the *deſpighting*, *or doing deſpight to the ſpirit of grace*, *Heb.* 10. 29. that which is proportioned to *Schammatha*, that makes the finall irreverſible ſeparation betweene us and Gods ſanctifying grace, the firſt did not wholly deprive the ſinner of all grace, no nor of ſufficient to enable to repent; the ſecond, did ſo for the preſent; the third did ſo finally alſo.

If you will now demand what are the effects and conſequents of that diſpleaſure of God, which this ſingle act of ſin brngs upon the offender; I anſwer, that I have in ſome meaſure anſwered that already, ſhewed you at the beginning many lugubrious effects of it; and if that be not ſufficient to ſatisfie you, or to ſhew the non-remiſſion of ſuch ſinne till it be retracted by repentance, I ſhall then proceed one degree farther yet, to tell you, §. 62.

That the method of Gods dealing in this caſe (of ſuch ſingle acts of commiſſion) ſeemeth by the Scripture to be after this manner. Upon any ſuch commiſſion, Satan is wont to accuſe that man before God, [ſuch or ſuch a regenerate child of thine is falne into ſuch a ſin, and ſo into my hands as the lictor) then to deſire, or require ſolemnly, to *have him to winnow*, by inflicting puniſhments upon him, and God yeelds many times to this demand of Satans, delivers the offender up to him in ſome limited manner. §. 63.

To which delivering though temptations (or afflictions which ordinarily are ſignified by temptations in Scripture) are conſtantly conſequent, yet not utter deſertion or withdrawing of grace, but allowing of ſtrength ſufficient to victory, δύναμιν τοῦ ὑπενεγκεῖν, *ability to beare*, 1. *Cor.* 10. 13. ἔκβασιν, *paſſage out* of thoſe difficulties in that ſame place, ἀρκοῦσαν χάριν, *ſufficient grace*, 2. *Cor.* 12. 9. and aſſiſtance of his *faith*, that it *faile not* totally, (which is the importance of Chriſts having prayed for *Peter*, *Luk.* 22. 32. his interceſſion being a powerfull interceſſion (as may appeare by his [*Father*, *I knew that thou beareſt me alwayes*, *Iob.* 11. 24] and ſo in effect, the obtaining from his Father, and actuall conferring on his Diſciples the grace which he prays for) And therefore it is obſervable, that as thoſe which are thus accuſed and demanded by Satan are generally ſuch as, were it not for this preſent particular commiſſion, would paſſe both with God and him, for faithfull Diſciples, and good Chriſtians, and therfore do ſtil retain that title (as appears by the word ἀδελφῶν, when Satan is called the *accuſer* of them, *Rev.* 12. 10. κατήγορος ἀδελφῶν, the *accuſer of the bretheren*, or the faithfull, it ſeems they are faithfull ſtill, though they have been guilty of ſome act, for which he thus accuſeth them, and ſo he is called ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. the *plaintiffe* or enemy, ἐνδίκων, *of you*, *i. e.* the *elect*, to whom he writes, *c.* 1. 1.) ſo the end of yeelding to Satans requeſt in delivering them up to him is alſo fatherly and gracious, ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν, *that they may be diſciplined*, or taught *not to blaſpheme*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. ἵνα ἐντραπῶσι, that *he may be aſhamed*, 2. *Theſ.* 3. 14. ἵνα πνεῦμα σωθῇ, that the *ſpirit may be ſaved*, 1. *Cor.* 5. 5. Whereupon it is, §. 64.

that the Fathers ſo clearly reſolve it far better, and more eligible to be delivered up to Satan, then to be delivered up to ones ſelfe, or ones owne affections or deſires; the firſt of them being the ordinary puniſhment of ſome act, or acts of ſinne on purpoſe to recall to repentance; the ſecond being the great plague of ſpirituall deſertion, inflicted on indulgent continuers in ſin, the firſt of them a mark of their not-yet-totall abdication, their continuance in ſonne-ſhip whom God thus *chaſtens* here, that he *may not condemne them with the world*; the ſecond, of their being cut off from that prerogative, whom God thus forſakes.

§.65. To which purpoſe, of Gods dealing mercifully with his ſervants in caſe of ſingle treſpaſſes preſently retracted by repentance, (ſo farre as not to inflict any grand ſpirituall puniſhment upon them, ſuch as abſolute deſertion, or utter diſinherizon) I conceive an Image repreſented to us in Chriſts command to his Diſciples, how oft they ſhould forgive the treſpaſſing brother, *Luk.*17.4. *If he treſpaſſe againſt thee ſeven times a day, and ſeven times a day returne againe to thee, ſaying, I repent, thou ſhalt forgive*; where *treſpaſſing ſeven times* is a phraſe, for [how oft ſoever he treſpaſſe] the word [*forgive*] notes the obligation to puniſhment without forgiveneſſe, and the interpoſing the word [*Repent*] proportioned to every *treſpaſſe*, ſhewes the neceſſity of that condition to waſh off that guilt; and the word [*Turne*] prefixt to that, argues the *Repentance* unavailable, if it containe not *turning* in it; upon which, forgiveneſſe being there commanded, if we ſhall now adde that other place *Mat.*6.36. where Gods mercy to us is made the meaſure of our mercy to our brethren, the argument will come home to prove that God doth ſo deale with us, and conſequently that every ſuch act of ſinne contracts a guilt, which is never pardoned but upon repentance, that upon the ſpeedy performance of that duty the patient is preſerved from any heavy ſpirituall puniſhment, which would otherwiſe attend that ſin.

§.66. What we have hitherto ſaid on this particular, will ſhew the danger of every act of deliberate ſinne, and yet withall the difference betwixt ſuch ſingle acts preſently retracted by repentance, and the like perſiſted, or continued in. To which purpoſe it will be worth the while to behold what we finde recorded of *David*. He, we know, had been guilty of ſeverall acts of ſinne, markt and cenſured in the Word of God; and ſome of them ſuch, as for them he was in a manner delivered up to Satan to be contumeliouſly uſed (as he ſeemes to conceive from *Shimei's* curſing of him, 2 *Sam.* 16.10. For *Shimei* being an inſtrument of Satans in curſing, and Satan thereto permitted by God upon ſome crime, for which he had accuſed him to God, he there calls it, *Gods ſaying to Shimei, Curſe David.*) And yet becauſe he continued not with indulgence in any of them, (his heart preſently ſmiting him, as in the caſe of numbring the people, and recalling him to inſtant reformation) ſave onely in that concerning *Uriah* the *Hittite* (wherein it appears that he continued neere the ſpace of a yeere, from before the conception till after the birth of the child, as is cleare by the time of *Nathans* comming to him, 2 *Sam.*12.1.) tis therefore left upon record by God, That *David did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, and turned not aſide from*

from any thing that he commanded him all the dayes of his life, save onely in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, 1 *King*.15.5.

From whence although I shall not conclude, that God saw no other sinne in *David* but that in the matter of *Uriah*, (because I know he saw and punisht that of numbring the People, and for that other though not acted, yet designed under oath against *Nabal*. 1 *Sam*. 25. 22. *Abigail* discernes that it was a causelesse shedding of blood, and an act of revenge, v.31. (and so no small sinne in Gods sight) yet tis cleare, that the sin in the matter of *Uriah*, that onely sinne continued in for any long time, made another manner of separation betweene God and *David*, contracted another kind of guilt, (and was a farre greater waster to conscience) then any of those other more speedily retracted sinnes did, was the onely remarkable ὑποστολὴ drawing back, or turning aside from obedience to God, the onely grand defection, shaking off Gods yoke, and so the onely chasme in his regenerate state. §.67.

These 4 Propositions being premised, whereof 3 were affirmative, and this last of a middle nature, The rest will be negative; As §.68.

Fiftly, that Hypocrisie is not reconcileable with a good conscience. I mean not Hypocrisie which consists in the concealing from the eyes of men the sins or frailties he is guilty of: for supposing those frailties to be what they are, *i. e.* acknowledging in them a guilt proportionate to their nature, I cannot see why the bare desire to conceale them from the eyes of men (separated from the sins or frailties themselves, and from any treacherous designe in such concealing) should be thought to superadde any farther degree of guilt; when on the other side the publicknesse of a sinne is an aggravation of it, makes it more scandalous, and so more criminous also. Nor againe doe I meane that hypocrisie, which is the taking in any thought of the praise of men (and the like) in our best actions: for as long as we have flesh about us, some degrees of this will goe neare sometimes to insinuate themselves, and then though they prove blemishes to those best actions, and by anticipating the payment and taking it here before hand, robbe us of that heavenly *reward* hereafter, which would otherwise be *rendred* to us *according to those works*, yet stil being but spots of sons, reconcileable with a regenerate estate, (as the straw and combustible superstruction, is (in Saint *Paul*) compatible with the true substantiall foundation,) they will be reconcileable with good conscience also, which is alwayes commensurate to a regenerate estate. §.69.

But the hypocrisy which I meane, is, first, that which is opposite to (and compatible with) Sincerity: first, the deceiving of men, with a pretence of piety, putting off the most Un-Christian sins, having no more of Christianity then will serve to mischieve others, *i. e.* onely the pretence of it to disguise the poyson of a bitter heart. Secondly, the deceiving of God, or thirdly, his owne soule, not dealing uprightly with either, and nothing more contrary then this to a good conscience. §. 70.

Secondly, the maimed mutilate obedience, the compounding betwixt God and Satan, the *Samaritanes* fearing the Lord and serving their owne Gods, §.71.

joyning others with God, and paying to them a respect equall or superiour to that which they pay to God, serving Mammon and God, or Mammon more then God. Or

§. 72. Thirdly, the formall profession, the σχῆμα or outside-garbe of Godlinesse, not joyning the inward, but making a meer pageant of piety, denying the power thereof. Or

§. 73. Fourthly, the hypocrisy of the wisher and woulder, that could wish he were better then he is, could be well pleased to *dye the death of the righteous*, to have all the gainfull part, the revenue and crown of a good Conscience, but will not be at the charge of a conscientious life; Or

§. 74. Fiftly, the hypocrisy of the partiall obedient, that is προσωπολήπτης of duty, chooses out the easy, smooth, plyable doctrines of Christianity, the cheap or costlesse performances, the ἀδάπανον εὐσέβειαν, will *serve the Lord his God of that which costs him nothing*, will doe some things that have nothing contrary to passions in generall, or particularly to his passions, like *Herod* that could *heare* Iohn Baptist *gladly*, be present at as many Sermons as he could wish, (and many the like painlesse performances) but when the weightier matters of the law expect to be taken up also, cannot submit to such burthens. Or

§. 75. Sixthly, the hypocrisy of the temporary, which abstaines onely as long as the punishment is over his head, and awes him to it, or as long as he meets with no temptations to the contrary; both which what place they have in the death-bed repentance even when it is not onely a sorrow for sinne, but a resolution of amendment also, I leave it to be considered. Or

§. 76. Seventhly, the hypocrisy of those which commit evill that good may come of it, who venture on the most Vn Christian sins for Gods glory, accept the person of the Almighty, doe injustice for his sake, or rather suppose him impotent, and fetch in the Devill or their owne vile lusts to releive and assist God, of whom the Apostle pronounceth their *damnation is just*, *Rom.* 3. 8. Or

§. 77. Lastly, the hypocrisy of him which keeps any one close undeposited sinne upon his soule. These are each of them contrary to some part of the ground of good Conscience, to the foundation of Christian confidence, some to the *sincerity*, some to the *resolution*, and some to the obedience, ἐν πᾶσι in all, and some to the perseverance which is absolutely necessary to the good Conscience.

§. 78. A sixth Proposition is, that a supine wilfull course of negligence and sloth, whether in duties of mans particular calling, or more especially in the duties of the generall calling as we are Christians, that sinne of ἀκηδεία, is not reconcileable with a good Conscience, (Omissions being destructive, such they may be as well as commissions) whether it be omission of the performance of morall or Christian precepts (Christs improvements of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount, being not onely as Counsells, but precepts obligatory to Christians) or whether it be onely the wilfull supine slothfull neglecting the meanes of knowledge, such as are agreeable to my course of life: Or the neglecting to make use of those meanes which are necessary to enable me to get out of any sinne: (One act of which nature was by Christ noted

noted and cenſured in his Diſciples, Their *not faſting and praying to caſt out that Devill that would not* otherwiſe *be caſt out.*) Or the not avoyding ſuch occaſions which are apt to betray me to it; Such acts as theſe, are (as Chriſt ſaith to thoſe Diſciples) acts of *faithleſneſſe* and *perverſeneſſe*, *Mat.* 17. 17. and conſequently the continued courſe of them contrary to the ſincerity of endeavour, and ſo unreconcileable with a good conſcience.

The ſeventh Propoſition is, that all habituall cuſtomary obdurate ſinning is unreconcileable utterly with a good Conſcience. I adde the word [*Obdurate*] which ſignifies the hardning of the heart againſt the knowledge of the truth, againſt exhortations, againſt threats of Gods word, againſt checks of naturall Conſcience, or illuminations of grace, againſt reſolutions and vowes to the contrary, for this will make any habit certainly unreconcileable with a good Conſcience; Whereas it is poſſible that ſome Cuſtomary ſinning may be through ignorance of the duty, and that ignorance if it be not contracted by ſome wilfulneſſe of mine may be matter of excuſe to me, and ſo reconcileable with a good conſcience by force of the ſecond Propoſition. But the obdurate holding out againſt Gods ſpirit, either knocking for admittance but not opened to, or checking and reſtraining from ſin after converſion, and not hardned to, reſiſting all Gods methods of working on us and ſtill reſolutely walking after the fleſh, this is by no means reconcileable with a good conſcience, nay nor any habit of ſin ſimply taken (for that is excluſive of the habit of piety neceſſary to the good coſcience) unleſſe it have that authentique plea of faultleſſe ignorance to excuſe it. §.79.

The eighth propoſition is, that any deliberate preſumptuous act or commiſſion of any ſin, againſt which damnation, or not inheriting the Kingdome of heaven, is pronounced in the New Teſtament, being not immediately retracted by repentance, humiliation, and all the effects of godly ſorrow, 2 *Cor.* 7.11 is wholly unreconcileable with a good conſcience. Such are *Gal.* 5.19. *Adultery*, *fornication*, *uncleanneſſe*, *laſciviouſneſſe*, (foure diſtinct degrees of incontinence) *Idolatry*, *witchcraft*, (two degrees of impiety) *hatred*, *variance*, *emulation*, *wrath*, *ſtrife*, *ſedition*, *hereſies*, *envyings*, *murthers*, (nine degrees of the *pride of life*, or that other branch of carnality flowing from θυμὸς, or the iraſcible faculty) *drunkenneſſe*, *revelling*, (the *ſpecies* of intemperance) and ſuch like: and the ſame with ſome variation and addition, 1 *Cor.* 6.9,10. and *Eph* 5.5. Every one of theſe at the very commiſſion have the nature of *peccata fauciantia*, wounding the Sinner to the heart, letting out a great deale of good blood and vitall ſpirits, and weakning the habit of Chriſtian vertue, of *peccata clamantia*, crying ſins, the voice of conſcience ſo wronged by them, calling to heaven for judgement againſt ſuch oppreſſours, or perhaps Satan carrying an accuſation thither againſt ſuch offenders; and if upon this they be not ſtraight retracted by an earneſt contrition, humiliation and repentance, they then proceed farther to be (any one act of them) *peccata vaſtantia conſcientiam*, Sins waſting & deſpoiling the conſcience, betraying to ſome ſadder puniſhment, even deſertion, and withdrawing of grace, and delivering up to our own hearts luſts, a conſequent of which are all vile affections, *Rom.* 1. and that κατάρα, curſing, *Heb.* 6.8. §.80.

§.81. *Vid.* Coch. *exe. Gem. Sanh. p.* 148. *& Buxtorf. Instit. Ep. p.* 75.

Just as it was the manner of the Jewes Judicatures. He that was punished by their נדוי separation or ἀφορισμὸς (not permitted to come neare any man within foure cubits) if he did not thereupon shew and approve his repentance within the space of two moneths, on that contumacy was then smitten with their חרם the anathemation or execration, and sometimes cast into prison. So is Gods dealing with the sinner remaining impenitent for such a space, substraction of Gods grace and spirit, the curse of the Gospel is his portion.

§.82. For the clearing of which truth yet farther, twill be observable that the danger that arises from one sinne of the first magnitude, against which the sentence is pronounced, that they who are guilty of such, shall never inherit eternall life, is or may be to him that after the knowledge of the truth relapses into it as great as that which is incurred by many lesser sinnes, or by a relapsing into a generality of impure life, and therefore the remaining in that one sinne, will be as unreconcileable with a regenerate estate, as the remaining in many other, and proportionably one act of it as noxious and wasting to conscience, as apt to provoke God to withdraw his spirit, as many acts of those lesser sins, and though neither any single act either of lesser or greater sinne in a sincere lover of Christ, presently retracted, (as it will be if he continue so) doth so grieve, as to quench Gods spirit utterly, so provoke God, as to make him wholly withdraw his grace and totally desert him; yet if that one sin be continued in, favoured and indulged to, either by multiplying more acts of it, or by not expressing repentance for it by all those means which the Apostle requires of his incestuous Corinthian, or which are named as effects of godly sorrow, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. this direfull punishment of desertion is then to be expected as the reward of any one such sinne, and from thence will follow any impossibility for that man so diserted ever to return to repentance again, Gods speciall ayde, which is now withdrawne, being absolutely necessary to that.

§.83. Where yet of those, that thus remain in any such sin, there is some difference; For some that so remain in sinne, doe so remain that they desire not to get out of it, hate to be reformed; others though ensnared so in sin that they cannot get out, yet are very earnest and sollicitous to find out some means to break through and escape out of those snares, and then this latter state of soul though it be not sufficient to give claime or right to mercy, (the victory over the world, the actuall forsaking of all such sins being necessary to that, and not only our wishes that we were victorious) yet is it a nearer and more hopefull capacity of the grace of repentance, more likely to be blessed by the returning of Gods spirit enabling to repent, then that former state of contemptuous continuers in the same sin appeares to be.

§.84. For though in both these states there is no repenting without Gods new gift of grace, and no absolute promise that God will be so gracious to such sinners, yet there is a place, 1 *Iohn* 5. 16. which makes a difference betweene *sinne unto death, and sinne not unto death* (both of them states of impenitence and persisting in sin, but differing as the two latter degrees of *excommunication* did among the Iewes, *Cherem* and *Scammatha* both noting a totall

tall ſeparation, but the latter a finall alſo, and by the compoſition of the word intimating death or deſolation, giving up the ſinner to divine vengeance, as hopeleſſe or contumacious, in reference to which the phraſe is here uſed, a ſinne unto death, whereas the other, of impenitence, not arrived to that deſperate contumacy, is a ſtate of curſe under *cherem* and *anathema*, but not unto death yet; and allowes this priviledge to the prayers of faithfull men for others, that they *ſhall obtain life for thoſe that have ſinned not unto death*, where that [the not *being to death*] of a ſinne, is to be taken not from the matter of the ſinne, but from the diſpoſition of the ſinner, and ſo from this desiring to get out, though he remain in it, or ſomewhat anſwerable to that, might, if any doubt were made of it, be proved as by other arguments ſo by putting together the peculiar uſe of the word ἁμαρτάνειν in that Authour, for abiding and continuing in ſinne, and the no extenuation that ſuch abiding is capable of (ſo farre as to make one ſuch abiding ſo much leſſe then another ſuch abiding, as that one ſhould be called εἰς θανατον, the other not) ſave only this of wiſhing and heaving and labouring to get out, (which ſuppoſes ſome remainder of exciting, though not of Sanctifying or aſſiſting grace) while the other goes on without any care or love or desire of reformation.

And though ſtill there be no promiſe that ſuch a relapſt unreformed ſinners prayers ſhall be heard for himſelfe upon that bare desire to get out, which his praying for grace will ſuppoſe (there being no ſuch promiſe of grace to the relapſt perſon upon his prayer, as there is to any elſe) yet it is cleare from that place of Saint *Iohn*, that this priviledge belongs to the prayers of other faithfull penitents, for ſuch a more moderate degree of unfaithfull impenitents upon their requeſt *God will give life to ſuch*, *i. e.* ſuch a degree of grace as ſhall be ſufficient to enable them to recover back to repentance, of which being given them upon the others prayers, if they make uſe, (as infallibly they will if they were and continue to be really ſollicitous to get out of that ſtate) they ſhall undoubtedly *live* eternally. §. 85.

The practice of which doctrine of Saint *Iohns* thus explayned, you ſhall ſee every where in the ſtories of, or canons for the pænitents, where they that for any ſinne of Eccleſiaſticall cognizance were excommunicated, did return to the peace of the Church, (an image of the peace of God) by ſeverall degrees, of which the firſt was, to ſtay and oft lye without the Church doores, and in the portch at houres of prayer; and deſire thoſe that retained the honour of being accounted faithfull, and ſo had liberty to go into the Church, to pray to God for them. Which as the ſecure ſupine negligent impænitent was not likely to doe, ſo was he not to expect the benefit of it, nor the Chriſtian brother obliged to pray for him, though yet by Saint *Iohns* [οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω I ſay not of that or concerning that ſtate of ſinne that he ſhall pray] I am not convinced that it were unlawfull ſo to doe. §. 86.

By all this thus ſet and bounded with its due limitations, the truth of my eight Propoſition will appeare, of the unreconcileableneſſe of ſuch preſumptuous acts of ſuch branded ſinnes unretracted, with a regenerate eſtate or good Conſcience, as being indeed quite contrary to every part and branch of the premiſed ground of a good Conſcience. §. 87.

To

§.88. To which all that I ſhall adde is onely this, that he that tenders but the comforts of this life, *i. e.* of a *Good Conſcience*, will be ſure never to commit deliberately and preſumptuouſly, or having by ſurreption fallen, never to lye downe or continue one minuit unhumbled unreformed in any ſuch ſinne, on which that direfull fate is by Chriſt or his Apoſtles inſcribed [ſhall not inherit the Kingdome of heaven] where yet as I ſhall not affirme that none ſhall ſubject us to that danger but thoſe which are there ſpecified, (for there is added and ſuch like, and other ſins there may be committed with the like deliberation and preſumption, and ſo as contrary to *Conſcience*) ſo ſhall I not ſay that all that commit any one act of any of theſe without that deliberation and preſumption, or that are preſently by their own heart ſmitten and brought to repentance for them, ſhall incur that danger; for the words ποιοῦντες and πράσσοντες, the doers and committers of them ſignifie the deliberate committing and indulgent yeelding to them, contrary to which the uſe of ſurreption at the time and the inſtant ſubſequent retractation of them (by contrition, confeſſion, forſaking, and reinforcement of greater care and vigilance for the future) will be ſure meanes to deliver from that danger.

§.89. Whereto yet this caution muſt be annext which may paſſe for

§.90. A ninth Propoſition. That the frequency or repetition of any ſuch acts after ſuch contrition and reſolution is an argument of the unſincerity of that contrition, of the deceavableneſſe of that pretended greater care, and ſo a ſymptome of an ill *conſcience*, as the ſpreading of the skall or leproſie after the Prieſts inſpection is ſufficient to pronounce the patient uncleane. *Levit.* 13. and as that diſeaſe in the relapſe may be mortall which at firſt was not.

§.91. Other more particular niceties I confeſſe there are, the diſtinguiſhing of which might be uſefull for ſome mens ſtates, and help diſabuſe them both out of an erroneous and a ſecure, yea and an over trembling conſcience. But becauſe that which would be thus proper to one, being laid down in common, or caſt into the lottery, might have the ill hap to be drawn by him to whom it is not proper, (as that phyſick which would purge out a diſtemper from one, will breed a weakneſſe in another) and becauſe no wiſe man ever thought fit to take lawes out of generalities, I ſhall reſolve rather to obey ſuch reaſons, and to be directed by ſuch examples, not to deſcend to particulars, then to be in danger firſt of tempting the Readers patience, then of interrupting his peace.

Pray for us, for we truſt we have a good Conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly. Heb. 13. 18.

FINIS.